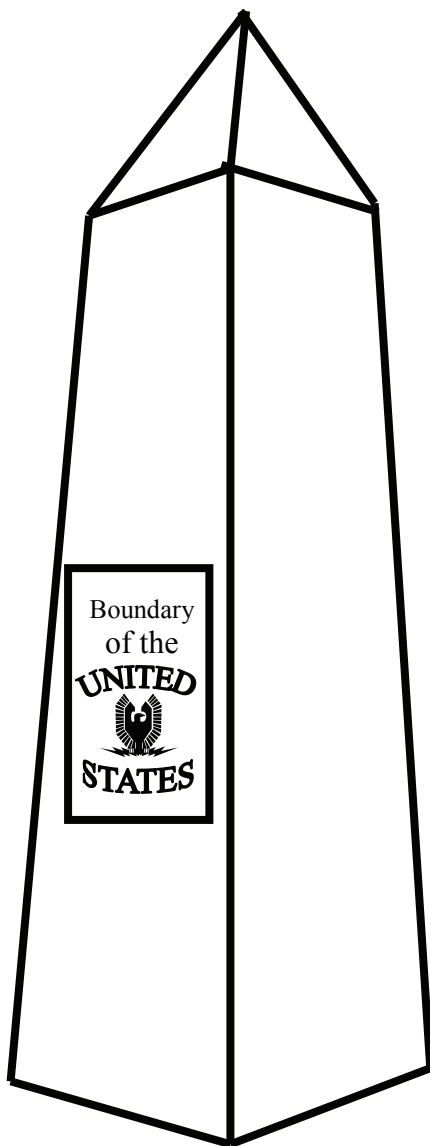


# The Chamizal Story

A story of border disputes, boundary lines and how people choose to resolve issues of sovereignty by peaceful means.



The story begins as the United States expands its borders from the coastlines of the Gulf of Mexico to the coastlines of the Pacific



The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty of 1848 ended the Mexican/American War.

*Trace the dotted lines to find out how much the United States grew.*

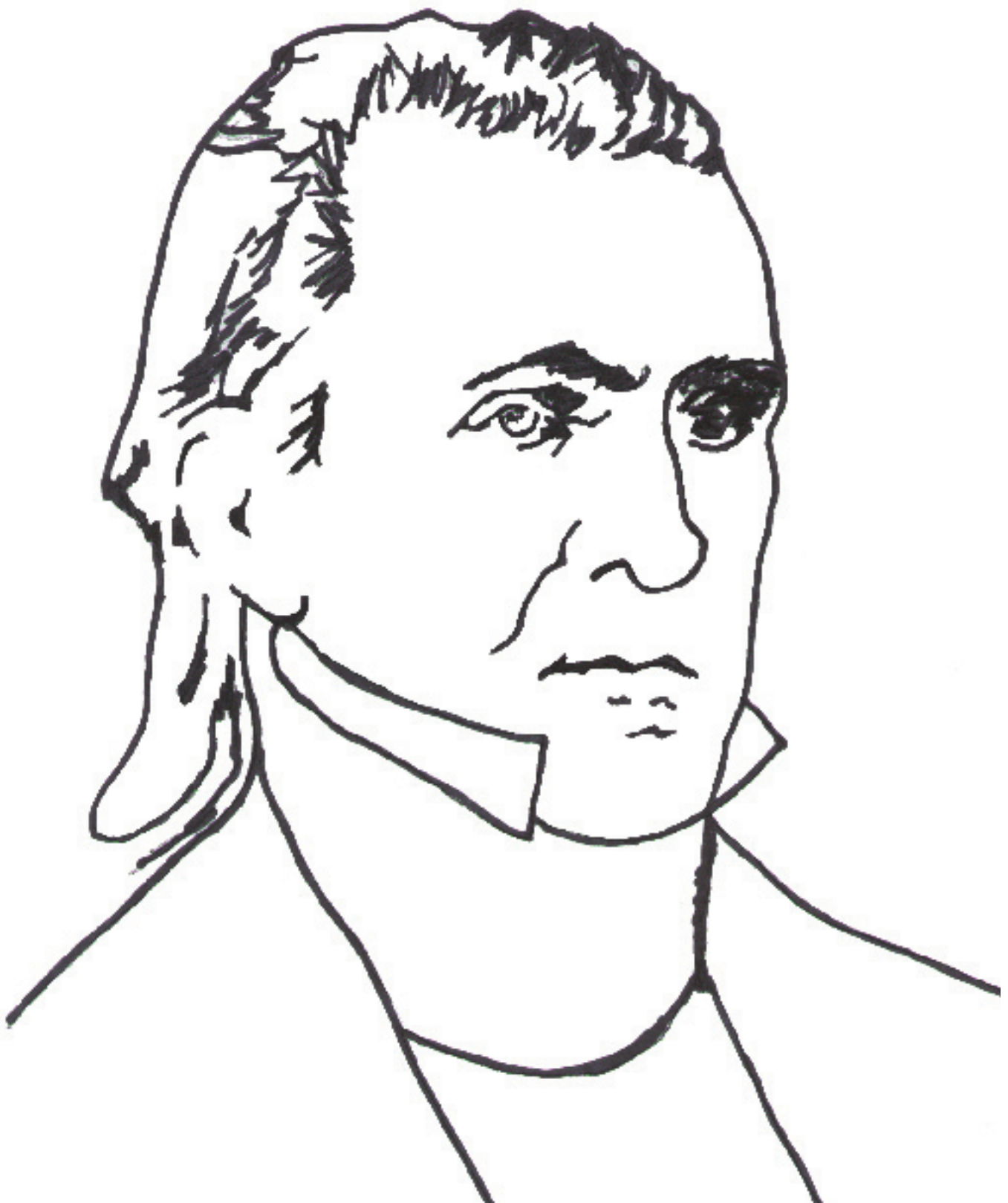


In addition to gaining all this new land, the treaty also made the Rio Grande the new boundary line between Mexico and the U.S.

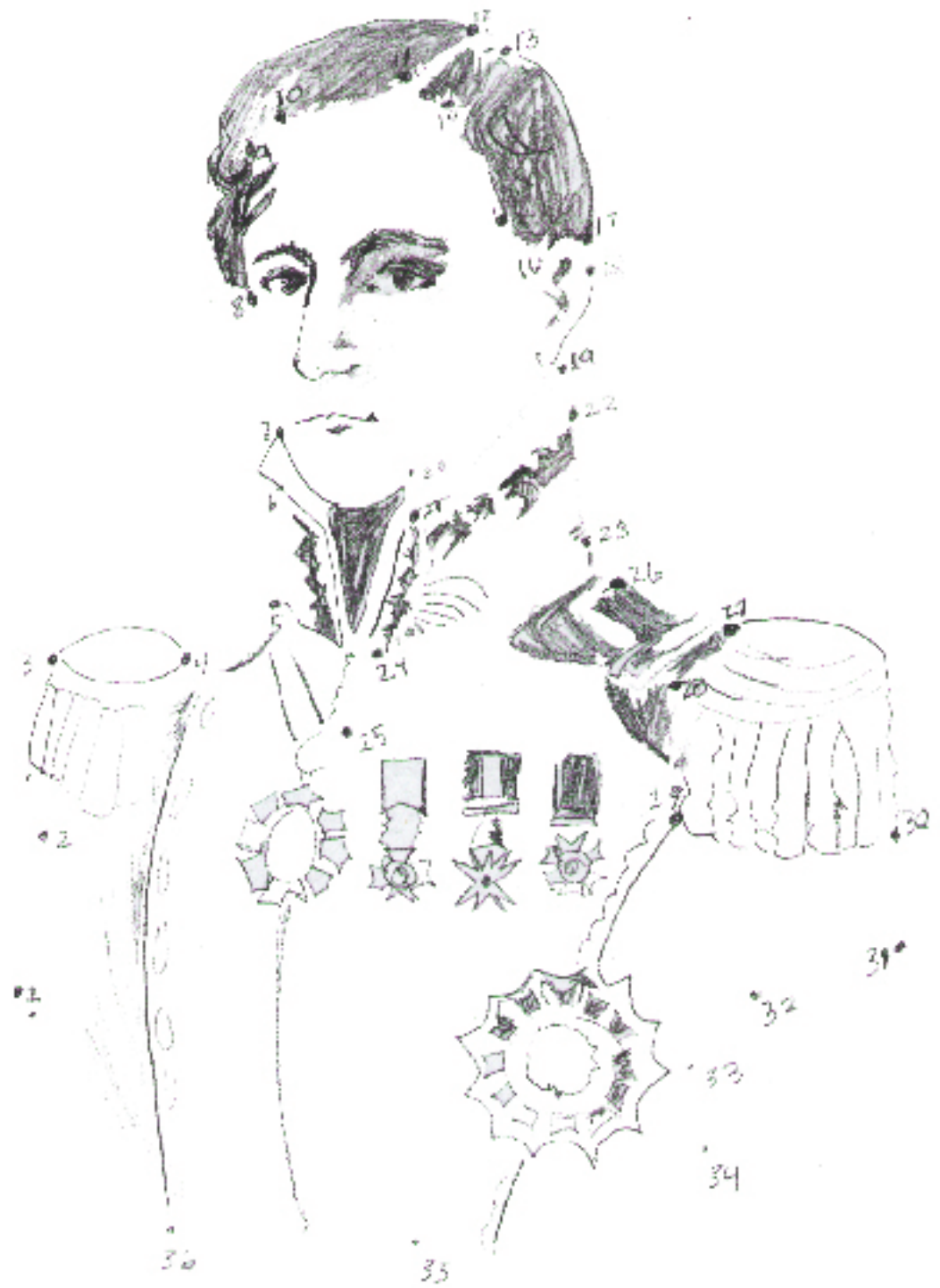
This is the story of the problems that arose when the two countries could not agree on where the boundary lines belonged.

*Color the United States blue and Mexico Red.*

The United States gained over one half million miles of land from Mexico. For \$15 million dollars the United States gained upper California, Nevada, Utah, parts of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming.



The United States President, James K. Polk sent map makers called surveyors to mark the new boundaries



The Mexican President agreed to send his map makers too.

This was not going to be an easy or a safe task. The U.S. sent the Army's elite Corp of Topographical Engineers along with infantry escorts to protect them from danger. The survey crew lost many members to indian raids, bandits and California Gold Rush fortune hunters.

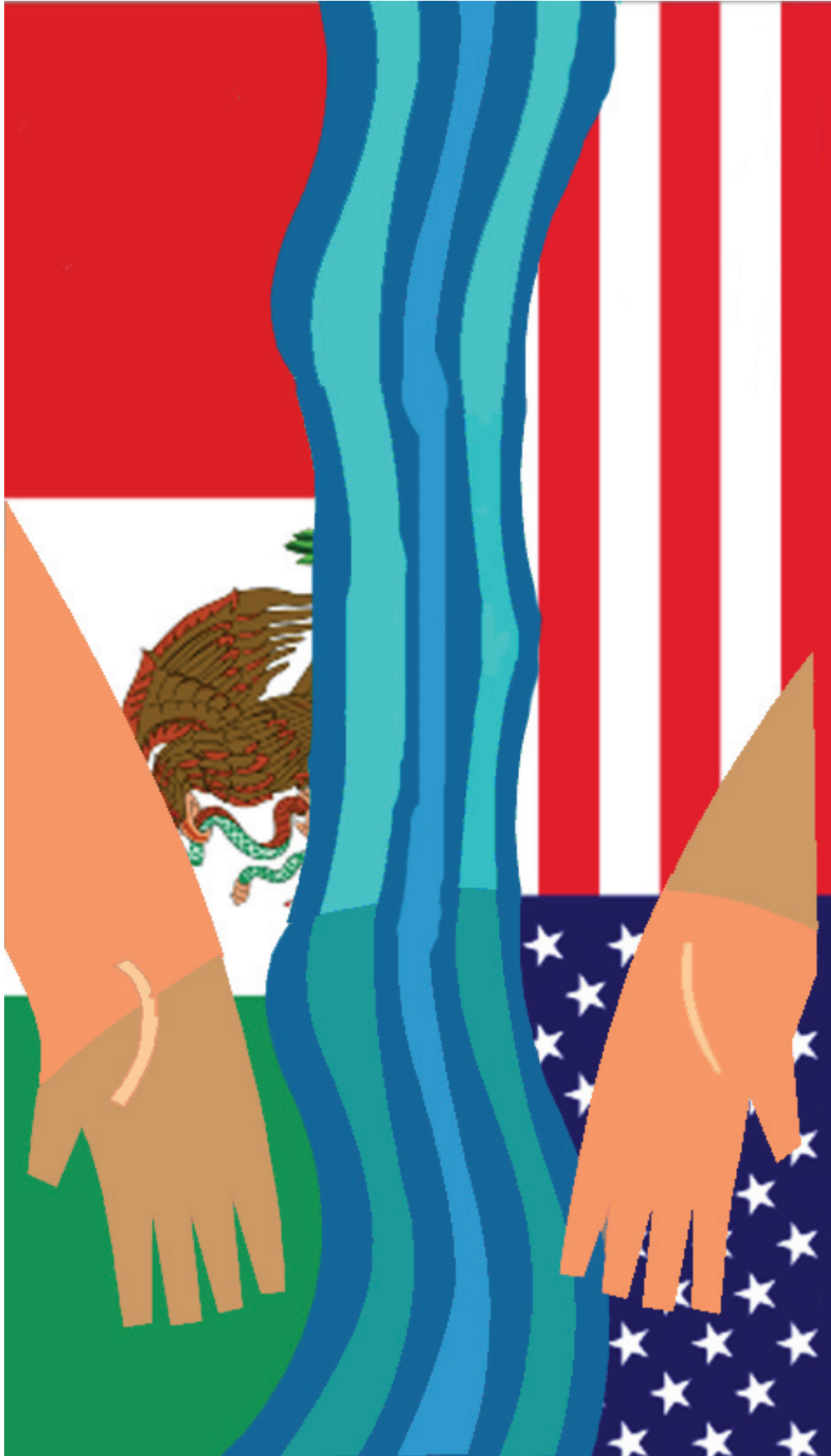


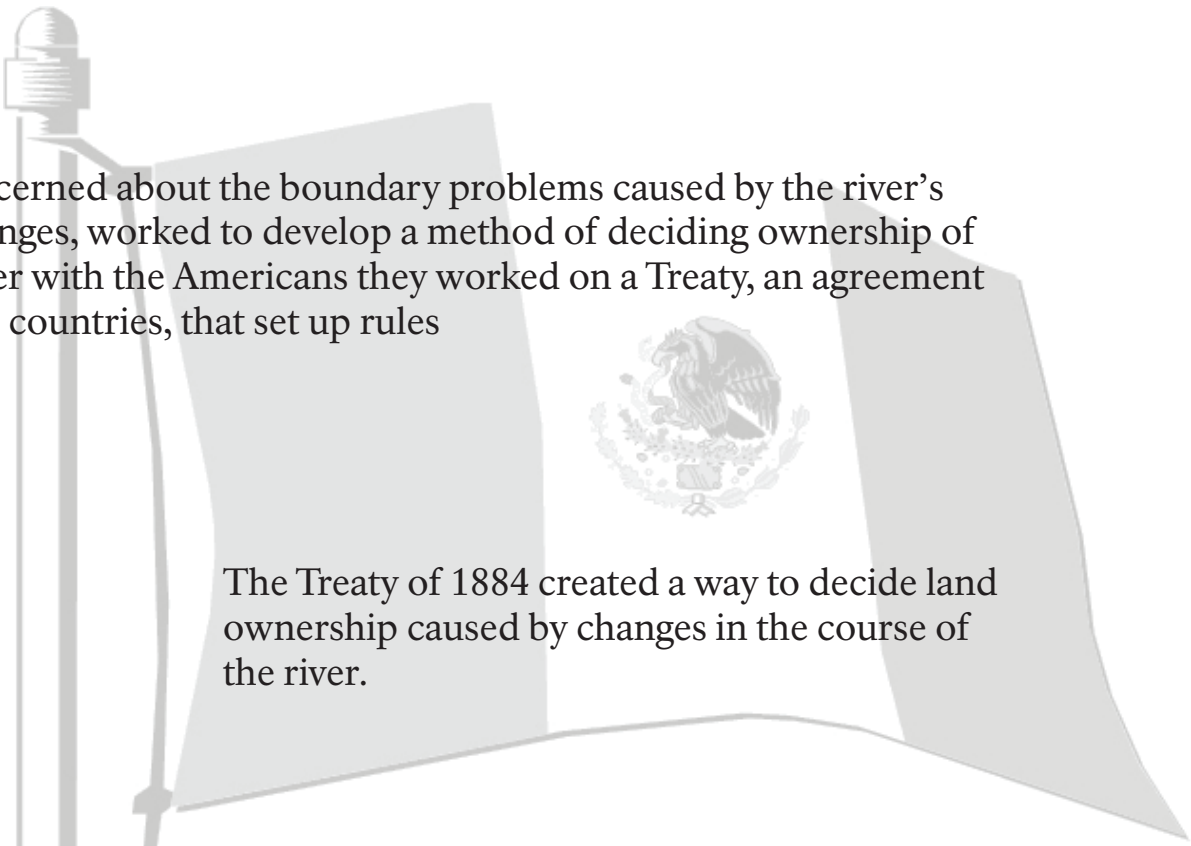
This task would take eight year to complete



Zachary Taylor, the new U.S. president, decided to help by forming a new group of surveyors called the International Boundary Commission to work on the mapping project. The group met in El Paso in 1850 and discovered there were errors in the maps. The river was no longer where the maps showed it should be! The new commissioners came up with a clever plan to solve the problem.

The problem was that the river was always moving. Sometimes it moved fast like when flood waters rushed through and re-arranged the channels. Other times it sort of oozed by, but always re-arranging itself to find the easiest route. Soil was carried away with the rushing waters or dropped and deposited by slow moving waters.





Mexico, concerned about the boundary problems caused by the river's constant changes, worked to develop a method of deciding ownership of land. Together with the Americans they worked on a Treaty, an agreement between two countries, that set up rules

The Treaty of 1884 created a way to decide land ownership caused by changes in the course of the river.

The International Boundary Commission became the group that would enforce the rules of the treaty.



But problems still remained...

In 1895, a Mexican farmer, Pedro Ignacio Garcia, filed a complaint with the International Boundary Commission. Because the river had moved, a part of the land that was given to him by his grandfather now was on the United States side of the river. He wanted his land back. The commission tried to solve the complaint but were not successful.



They even tried to bring in someone from Canada, another U.S. neighbor, to help them solve the dispute, but nothing was settled for another 50 years!



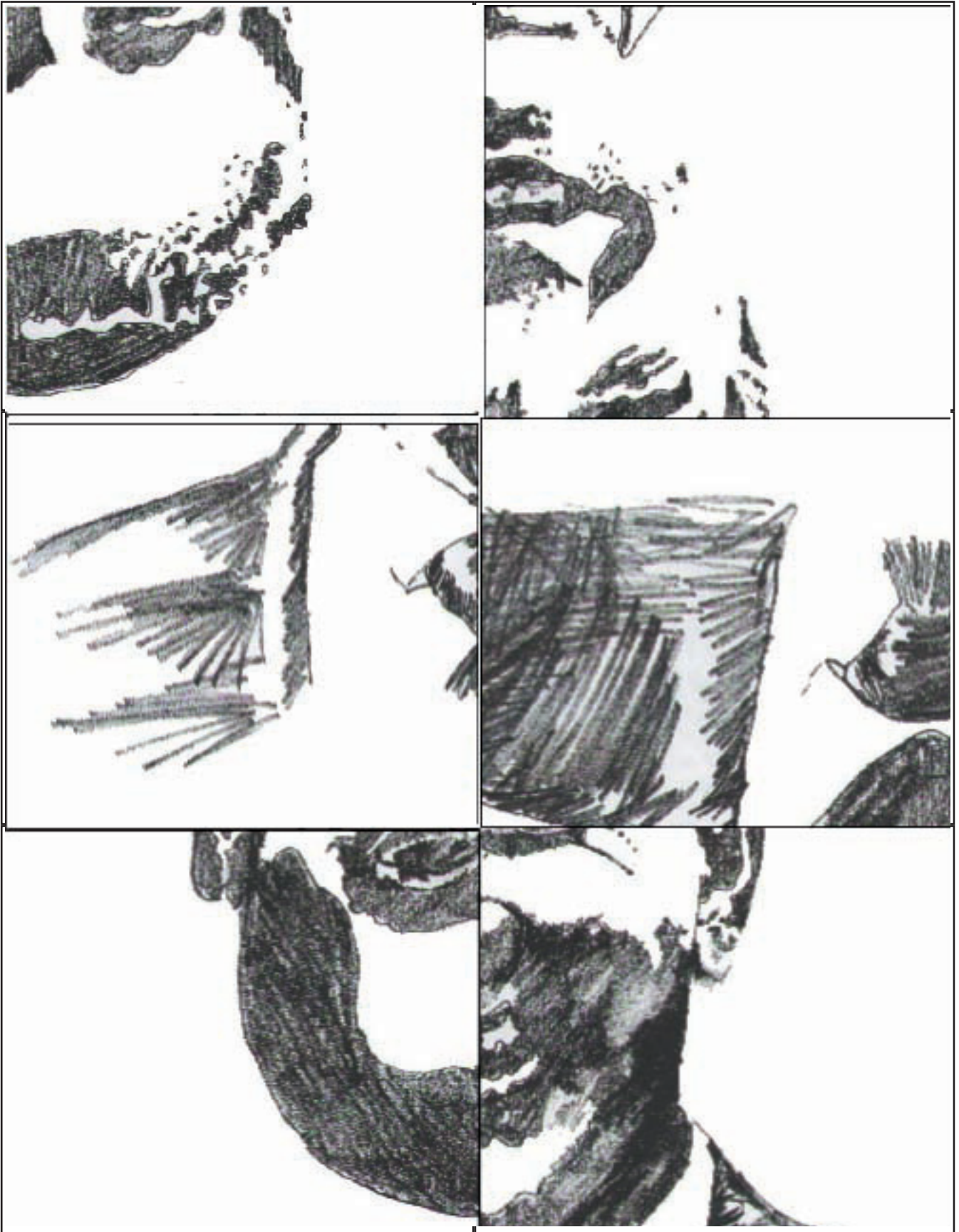
Presidents from  
Mexico and the  
U.S. agree to  
resolve the  
Chamizal issue



Finally, in 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy visited with Mexican president Adolfo Lopez Mateos to agree to settle the problem.



President John F. Kennedy  
coloring page



*Cut out the pieces and put them in order to find the hidden picture*

*Blank page*

3

2

1

A

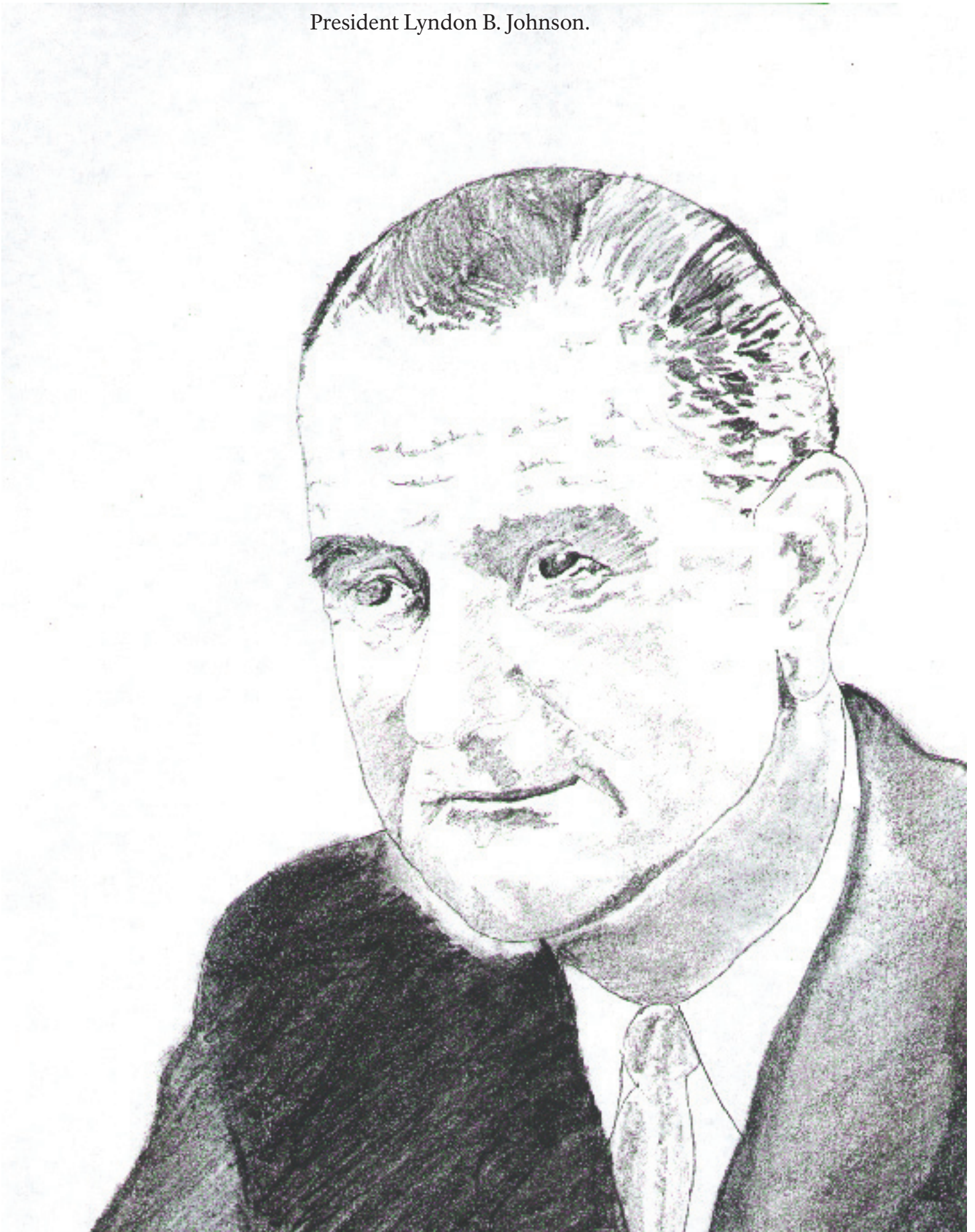
B

Use this grid to paste the items you cut out to find the hidden picture



In 1964, U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson and Mexican President Adolfo Lopez Mateos meet and finally settle the border dispute. Together they unveil the new US/MX boundary marker.

President Lyndon B. Johnson.



The boundaries changed so the Rio Grande channel had to be moved to form the new border

A new concrete lined channel had to be built

U.S. gains 193 acres of Mexico 's Cordova Island

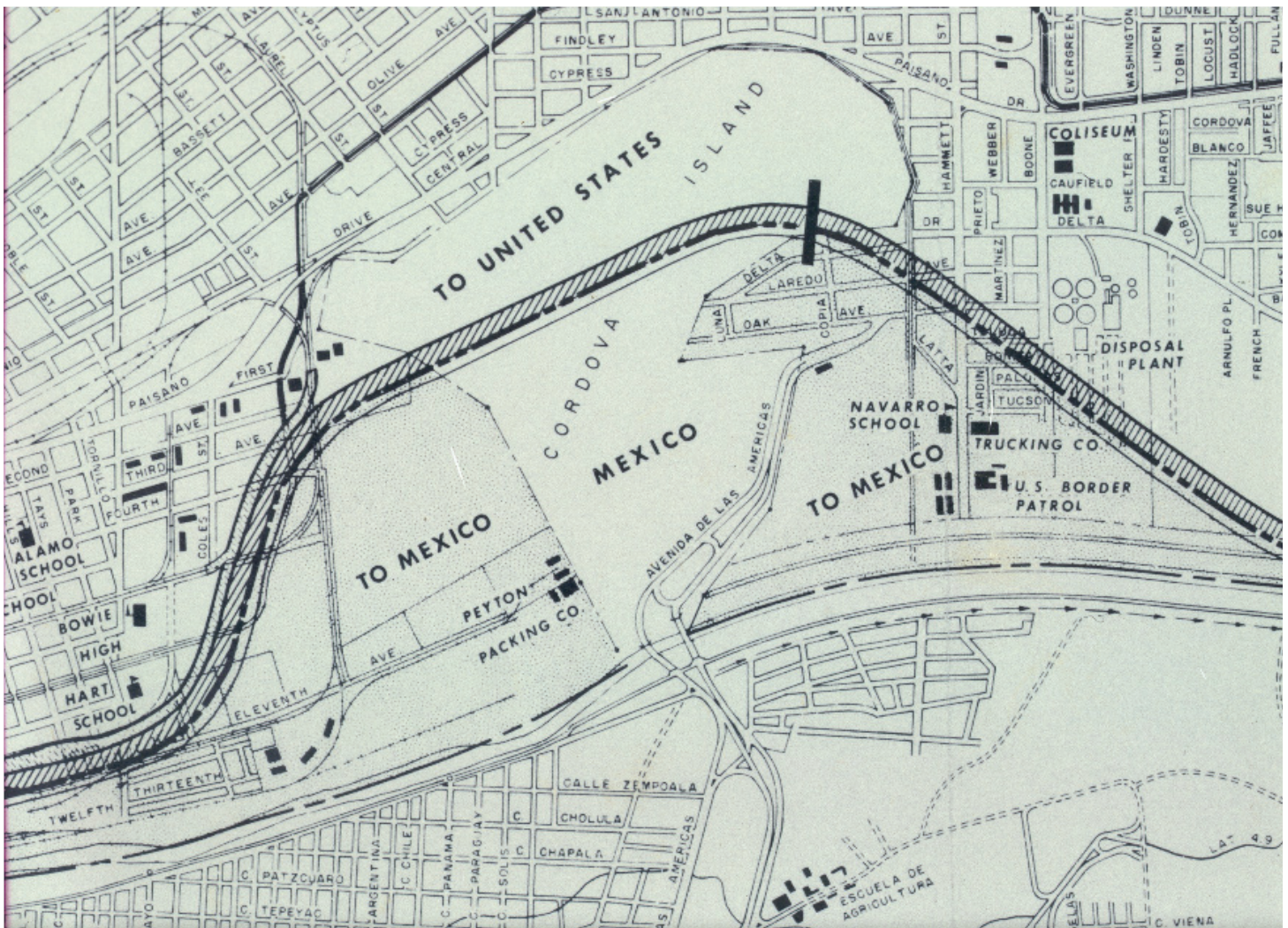


Mexico gains 630 acres of south El Paso and east of Cordova Island

*Color the U.S. territory red and the Mexican territory blue. Now color the relocated area yellow.*

5,500 residents had to move from their land so it could be given back to Mexico.

855 houses, a school, government buildings, tenement houses, businesses and their land were affected.



*Look carefully at the photograph and see if you can find the school that was affect by the channel change. Mark it with an X.*

Imagine that you were living in one of the homes that will be given to Mexico. Use the space below to describe how you feel about losing your home and your land.

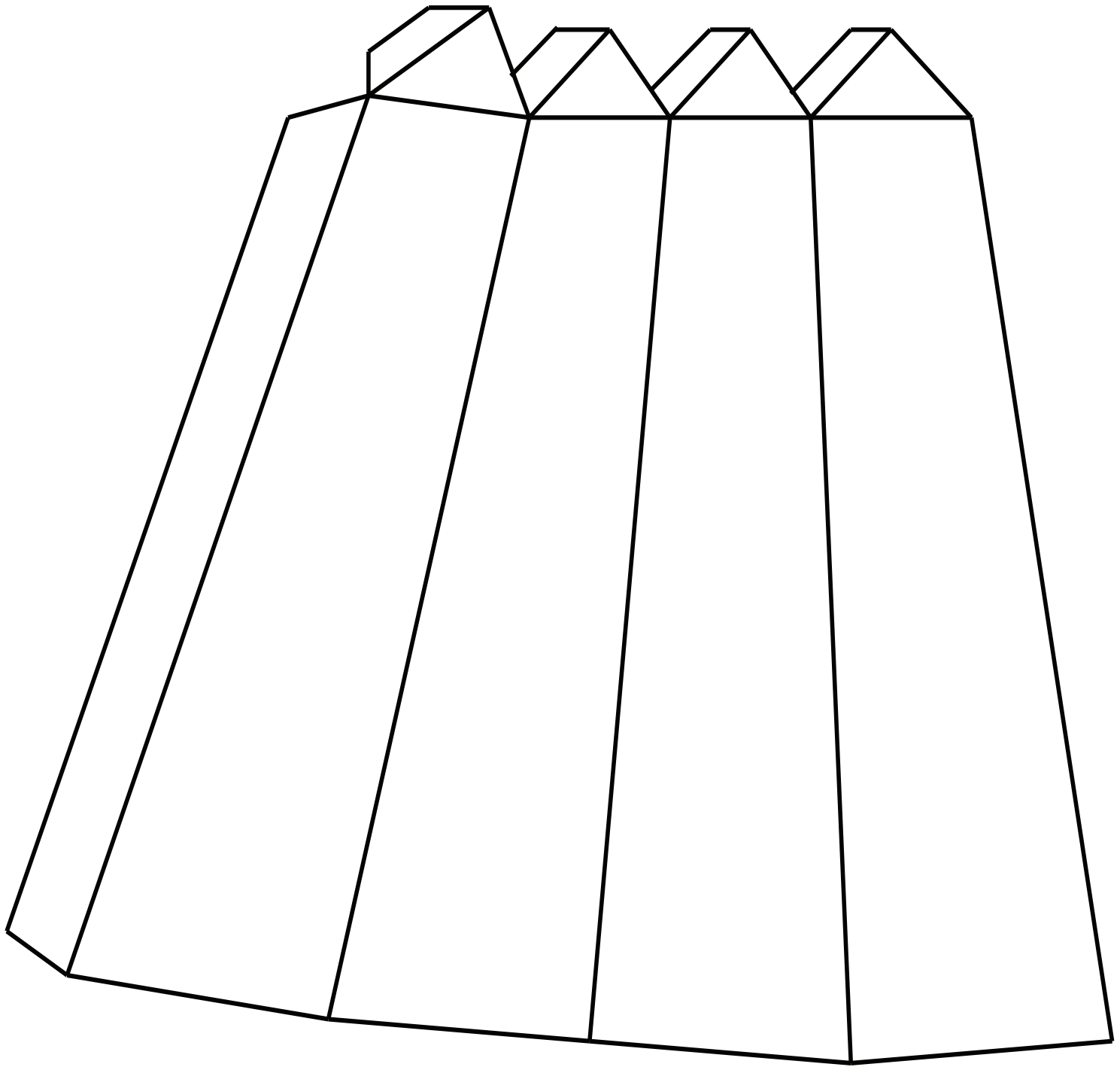


It may have taken a long time to settle these disputes, but it was settled in a peaceful way. This is why the United States congress set aside a portion of the land for a park.

The park celebrates Mexican-American friendship and goodwill. It remembers the peaceful settlements by using music, visual arts, dance and drama as cultural bridges as strong as the concrete spans that cross the Rio Grande.

*What are some ways you could share friendship and goodwill in your community?  
Jot some ideas on this page and share them with your neighbor.*

*Use this as a template to create your own boundary marker  
Just cut along the dotted lines and glue the tabs*



This publication was produced by Blanche Herrera through the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program as part of the Inter-Mountain Region of the National Parks Service.

For more information on other educational outreach programs please contact Julie Fonseca de Borges, Educational Specialist.  
[julie\\_fonseca\\_de\\_borges@nps.gov](mailto:julie_fonseca_de_borges@nps.gov)



### **Chamizal National Memorial**

800 S. San Marcial  
El Paso, TX 79905  
915-532-7273

<http://www.nps.gov/cham>